

Priority Area Kaizen: Agency FOIA process

What

- EPA uses a decentralized model for processing FOIA requests which relies on a variety of different processes across the agency. Simultaneously, the number of FOIA requests that involve more than one office or region has increased significantly in the last several years; which creates significant burden upon agency staff, results in confusion, increases the risk of litigation, affects timeliness of initial interaction with and final response to requestors, and raises uncertainty regarding the application of FOIA across the agency.

Performance Goal

- Meet statutory deadlines for responding to FOIA requests and appeals on 100% of such requests received by FY22.

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Why

- Reduce the overall burden to EPA for processing FOIA requests
- Improve the quality and consistency of responses
- Limit agency exposure to lawsuits under FOIA
- Improve public satisfaction with EPA FOIA responses

How

- Conduct an Agency-wide process improvement event to standardize the process for responding to FOIA – by January 2018
- Develop standard work, process flow, definitions, and performance targets across all Regions – by April 2018
- Start to implement changes for new process – by July 2018
- Immediate next steps: research and conduct root-cause analysis on FOIA issues